

Education and Social Integration

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Flemish Community



Ministry of the Flemish Community
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*Educational Research
in Flanders*

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INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this report is to describe which kind of educational problems have been discussed by researchers in Flanders since 1988 (approximately during the last five years). Before continuing, it is useful to present a brief picture of the structure of the field educational researchers are interested in. This educational system can roughly be divided into two parts: on the one hand, education within the community educational system¹ and on the other hand, education outside the community educational system. Education within the community educational system is organized by different organizing authorities, namely by ARGO (responsible for community schools), by the provincial and municipal authorities, and by natural and artificial persons (mainly Catholic schools).

There are three levels of education: elementary education, secondary education and higher education. Elementary education is divided into two parts: non-compulsory nursery schools (children of 2.5 to 6 years old) and compulsory primary school (children of 6 to 12 years old). In theory, secondary schools provide education to youngsters between 12 and 18 years old. Starting with the second grade, this level is organized in four separate tracks: 1) General education; 2) Technical education; 3) Art education and 4) Vocational education. Important to note is the fact that compulsory school attendance is full-time up to the age of 15 or 16. From that moment on, until the age of 18, a minority of pupils are obliged to attend a part-time training program in addition to a training program provided by industry. The majority of the pupils continue their full time education in secondary schools and/or higher education. Higher education is organized in two different types of institutions, namely university education, and one-cycle and two cycles colleges.

Besides these formulas, the community educational system also consists of distant learning (afstandsonderwijs) and social advancement education (onderwijs voor sociale promotie). The former is adapted to the level of the student and is mainly intended for adults who need to fill an educational gap, those who are obliged to re-train or for those preparing for examinations. The latter is also intended for employed people as a means of social and professional advancement.

Apart from the different types of education discussed above, there are still others such as private distance education, training for job-seekers and employees organized by the Flemish employment and vocational training agency (VDAB²), training organized by employers' organizations, training provided within the Armed Forces, alternative education and other systems of apprenticeship, professional training for ministry staff and vocational training in industry. All of the above-mentioned is referred to as education outside the community educational system.

To organize education, Flanders made a major investment in people, equipment and buildings. In 1992, the budget for education was 200,934.2 million BEF. This budget provided jobs to 117,630 teachers, a number of headmasters, clerical and maintenance staff, university lecturers and so forth, and provided education for 1,241,629 students. Although in fixed figures, the budget of 1992 shows an increase of 4.51% in comparison with the 1989 budget, in terms of a percentage of the GDP, this budget did not expand much (from 5% in 1990 to 5.2% in 1992)³.

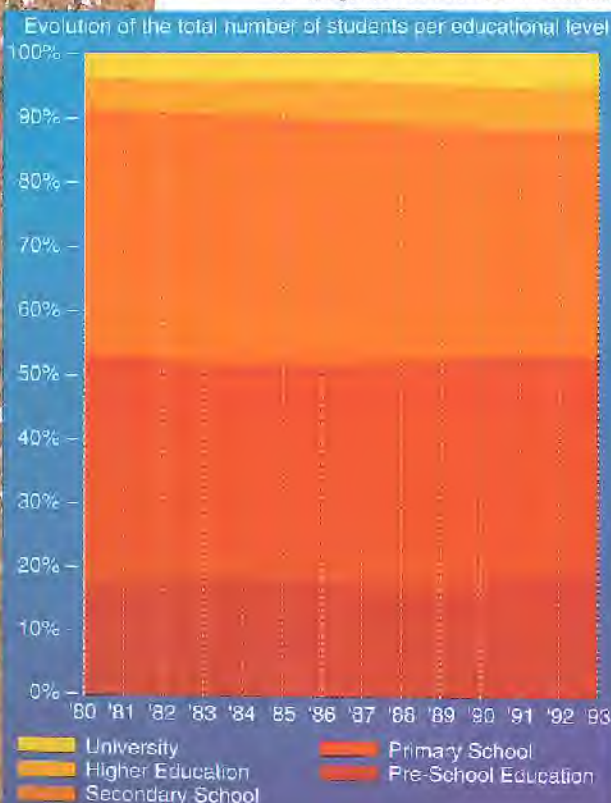
Although the national debt and the declining birthrate certainly were reasons for a slight increase of the budget, education has always been and still is an important issue on the political agenda. Ideological differences among school networks did not help to bring about an uncomplicated national educational policy. Democratic movements during the 1960s and the 1970s promoted the reorganization of secondary schools into a comprehensive system, and inspired the government to an expansion of the scholarship system for higher education. But that was not all. Factors such as the third industrial revolution, the rapid technological and economical changes, the European integration, the growing importance of foreign languages, the expansion of the so-called tertiary sector, the increasing significance of media, etc. require general education for everyone. At the same time, they encourage the expansion of a post-school sector which accounts for vocational training, etc.

1 From 1970 on, the political, legislative and administrative structures of the former unitary State, evolved towards a federal system. This process of federalization, although not finished, already made a clear start in 1989. Since then, there are three levels of authority, namely the Federal State, the Communities and the Regions. Three Communities exist in Belgium: the Flemish, the French and the German-speaking Communities. They are responsible for cultural and person-related matters, including education. Therefore, we do not speak of a national educational system, but of a community educational system.

2 VDAB (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling) works as a hinge in the Flemish world of education and training. In a very flexible way, job market demand and manpower supply are attuned to one another by means of short term and long-term training courses, apprenticeships, etc.

3 Statinfo. Schooljaar 1992-1993. Ministry of the Flemish Community, Department of Education. Statistics Administration, 57.

Source: Ministry of the Flemish Community - Education Department



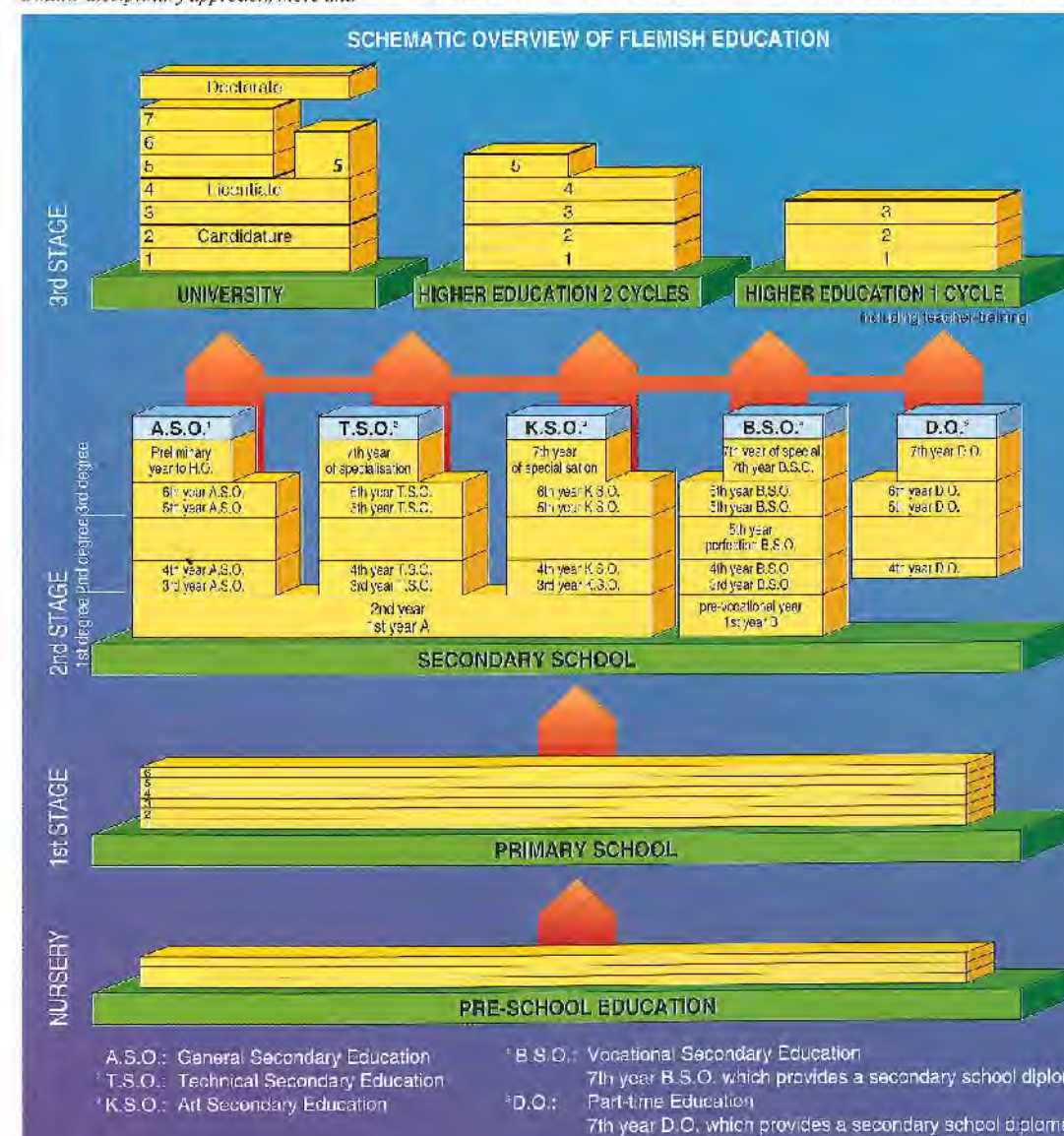
The need for education in a rapidly changing society is high, as is educational research. Since the establishment of the education departments at universities, educational research has been on the forefront. At the onset, empirical research was less popular, but presently most educationalists are involved in empirical research, and this is the case for most sub-disciplines of educational science such as didactics, historical pedagogy, comparative pedagogy, social pedagogy and remedial education. Besides the members of the education departments, sociologists, psychologists, legal researchers, economists, historians and linguists are interested in and are investing in educational research. This is also the case - though probably less - in philosophy, medical science, applied sciences, kinesitherapy, etc. Since educational researchers realized that the study of education can only benefit from a multi-disciplinary approach, more and

more researchers cooperate or analyse education from different disciplinary angles. For that reason, this tableau of educational research in Flanders will not try to differentiate between the disciplinary differences of the projects, but will focus on a description of the fields of research. Methodological problems will only be mentioned briefly since the main purpose is to describe the fields of interest of Flemish educational researchers. In general, educational researchers in Flanders also prefer a quantitative approach, even though ethnographic and other qualitative approaches enjoy more attention recently. The growing interest for action-research in the field of educational research created forms of cooperation between schools, policy makers, counsellors and researchers.

There are two important financing sources for educational research: the Funding for Educational Policy and

Practice-oriented Scientific Research by the Ministry of Education and by the National Science Foundation.

To illustrate this on the following pages, we relied on information provided by IWETO, ADIOV and the Division of Policy Oriented Coordination (Department of Education, Ministry of the Flemish Community). We also contacted most of the university teachers of educational science by telephone. This method resulted in a long list of researchers and projects. In Flanders, many researchers seem to be interested in educational research, even though a lot have only had the opportunity to execute a single project. For that reason, only the research units showing a certain continuity in their projects are mentioned in the list in the second part of this report. Concerning the thematic description, we would like to stress the fact that, during the discussion of a theme, it was impos-



sible to mention all research-units. However, we tried to outline the theme as completely as possible.

It was not easy to find a logical scheme to present all themes of educational research coherently. The selection on the next pages is debatable. Moreover, it is even possible that research mentioned in one place is also discussed in another one. Nevertheless, we hope to give a reliable overview of the empirical educational research in Flanders during the last five years. Purely theoretical work is not included in this description.

Thematic Description of Educational Research

1. Education within the Community Educational System

1.1. Educational organization

1.1.1. The societal level

The educational structure undoubtedly has connections with the social structure of society. The international migration stream, the unification of Europe, the economic situation, the legal structure, changing value systems and devaluation, amongst other factors, have pushed educational researchers to investigate the link between these developments and educational structure and policy.

The first interesting piece of research is provided by historians. They paint an overall picture of the historical development of the educational system in Flanders. They offer a number of descriptions of school life in the past, e.g. the historical description of daily educational practices during the 19th and 20th centuries (EDU38). On the other hand, the historical analysis is specifically related to various topics: 1) Regions, e.g. education for working-class pupils

in the diocese of Gent, the history of secondary education for boys in the province of Limburg, etc. (EDU6); 2) Actors, e.g. the study of the changing social position of teachers (EDU6, EDU38); 3) Educational levels, e.g. the history of elementary and secondary education (EDU6) and 4) The curriculum, e.g. the development of physical education, the agricultural education during the interbellum, ... (EDU6).

Secondly, recent social trends and their impact on educational policy came to the forefront. Some of these trends include the growing flow of immigrants creating the need for multicultural education; changing mundane relations such as the European Integration and the process of internationalization; the demand for the improvement of equal educational opportunities and consequently the creation of a comprehensive educational system (EDU3, EDU58). The recent federalization of Belgium, which handed over the responsibility for education to the communities, is not to be overlooked.

Within the context of improving equal education opportunities, the effectiveness of education has been studied. The diversity of meanings regarding the concept of 'effectiveness' poses a problem for research on this subject. Effectiveness is of-

ten reduced to effectiveness in an economical sense. Output is a primary criterion. Pupils should be ready for the labour market; if this is not the case, our educational system is ineffective. Nevertheless, the concept also harbours other meanings, such as the achievement of pupils/students, the number of drop-outs, the success rate of pupils per school or class, the feelings of well-being of pupils, etc. This diversity in meaning makes comparisons of the project results difficult.

An interesting issue in this respect concerns the study of performance-indicators in education on the national level (EDU5, EDU7, EDU21, EDU30, EDU46 and the INES-project). Most of these projects are linked to the OECD. Studies concentrating on specific educational levels are also relevant, namely 1) The quality of kindergarten (EDU44) where the relationship between didactic methods, process-variables and effect variables is analysed and 2) The quality of part-time secondary education (EDU21).

Some researchers specifically study the phenomenon of success and failure (EDU21, EDU25). The main issue is that if too many students fail, something is wrong with the effectiveness of the educational system. These projects try to identify correlates of passing and failing. Because

of the high number of failures, an enormous potential is lost. To prevent this loss, strategies to help these children should already be organized in kindergarten (EDU44). Moreover, several paradoxical effects of educational policy are explored, such as self-fulfilling prophecies, images of good and bad pupils, etc. Finally, research also aims to develop instruments to measure effectiveness (EDU12). We will expand this theme later on when discussing school levels.

Comparative educational research should also be mentioned in this paragraph (EDU58). Recently, several projects have concentrated on the comparison of educational processes in different, mostly European, countries. Some examples include: 1) A comparison of comprehensive educational systems; 2) International research regarding basic education in secondary schools and 3) A comparative analysis of secondary education in Flanders and in the Netherlands.

Thirdly, in modern times, educational policy has always been the responsibility of the government, and one of the main instruments for this policy has been the law. Lawyers have studied the legal implications of the educational structure. Some of them have not only concentrated on university legislation, but also on problems of deregulation, freedom of education and the protection of the legal rights of pupils/students and teachers (EDU31, EDU42). Recently, more researchers deal with the impact of European legislation. Some of the topics discussed include the European educational policy, the Board of Europe's role in matters of education, linguistic laws, the recognition of diplomas, study abroad, the influence of European legislation on Belgian policy, etc.

Fourthly, economists question the link between the economic situation of the country and the investment in education. They calculate the contribution of education by the growth

of the Belgian economy and the private and social returns of education (EDU34). Facing a relatively expensive educational system, they compare the cost of Flemish education to other countries (EDU5). Because the law stipulates that elementary and secondary education should be free, they calculate what parents have to pay for this education and whether the scholarships are necessary and sufficient (EDU5). Moreover, they investigate whether scholarships, especially in higher education, are granted to people who are indeed in need of them. The different principles for financing schools belonging to different networks⁴ was an instigation to make a comparative analysis of the cost of education in these networks (EDU5, EDU35, EDU55). The problem of the large number of small institutions for higher education gave rise to calculations regarding the ideal size of these institutions from an economi-

⁴ As a result of the constitutional freedom to organize education, there are three organizing bodies in Flanders, which we call 'networks'. These are:

- Community Education: education set up by the Autonomous Community Education Council (ARGO) on behalf of the Flemish Community.
- Subsidized Official Education: provincial education organized by provincial authorities, and municipal education set up by municipal authorities.
- Subsidized Private Education: education set up by a private person or organization. This network mainly consists of Catholic education.

cal standpoint (EDU5, EDU34). Because the inequality in educational opportunities is undeniable, they investigated the cost of higher education as well as the consequences of granting scholarships for the choice of higher educational training for students (EDU5).

Another aspect of higher education under investigation concerns the difference between an open system and a closed system (entrance examinations) (EDU34). The issue in question is which of the two systems is the least expensive.

1.1.2. The school level

Since policy makers recently opted for deregulation and devolution, school management has become an important domain of research. Schools receive a great deal of autonomy to determine their own policy, but along with this, they are expected to give teachers, parents and representatives of society at large a voice in school management within the framework of all types of participatory councils. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that in several projects, the headmaster plays a central role in school management. One group of researchers focuses on the involvement of certain participants in these councils (EDU6, EDU32, EDU46, EDU47, EDU55, EDU58), such as teachers and their unions as well as the way they perceive their involvement, the growing significance of local participating councils in decision-making and



the parents' organizations. Their aim is mainly to detect different management styles in schools and networks, in addition to the possibilities and problems of participation. Since the establishment of local school councils in community schools and the participating councils in the grant-aided networks, researchers have specifically analysed these councils (EDU16, EDU55). Both councils contain the following factions: the headmaster, the teachers, the parents and the local economical, social and cultural organizations. The main objective of these projects is to discover to which extent these councils contribute to school management.

School management was not only changed under the influence of these new ideas of participatory management, but also due to the growing demand for more professional school management. Several researchers took this problem into consideration, but highlighted different aspects:

- 1) Some researchers analysed the range of freedom for school-based management granted by law and checked to which extent and how schools really use this freedom depending on the school's structural characteristics (EDU55);
- 2) Others made a comparison between the way a school should be managed according to the official (legal) directives and the way it actually happens. They also investigated whether there was a relationship between the management style and certain structural factors such as the network, the school size, the teaching methods, etc. (EDU58);
- 3) A third project deals with the process of flexibility in schools (EDU55). The issue questioned how schools adapt to changes;
- 4) They also questioned schools about the use of marketing principles (EDU32), or how headmasters perceived their management of personnel (EDU5, SIU22);
- 5) Headmasters were asked in which domains and on which level they wanted deregulation (EDU47);



6) The same research unit investigated whether school headmasters wanted extra training in order to cope with the challenge of deregulation (EDU47).

This interest in management is attended by a growing interest in research on the effectiveness of schooling. This theme already appeared in the preceding section in which we discussed the effectiveness on the macro level. However, most research does deal with the effectiveness of schooling. Some examples are:

- * An analysis of school quality based on the position of former students in the labour market (EDU12);
- * An analysis of the influence of different structural elements on school effectiveness, such as school size, level, policy, type of education, didactic methods, pupils' social background, etc. (EDU12);
- * Effectiveness of schooling and educational resource management (EDU55). The problem concerns the impact of the school authority levels and how schools can most effectively respond to existing policies as well as the most recent policies and reforms designed to enhance the effectiveness of schooling and of educational resource management. The same question is the research topic in thirteen other Western countries, coordinated by the OECD;
- * A study of the effectiveness of lo-

cal school organizations in secondary education (EDU47, EDU55).

One approach needs special attention because the quality of education is not only perceived in terms of achievement, but also in terms of the well-being of the pupils (EDU46, EDU55). These researchers link the opinions of teachers to headmasters about school policy, pupil achievement in Dutch and Mathematics, and well-being. These projects also point out that management influences the actors. Besides the impact of management on pupils, the impact of inspection on the functioning of teachers and headmasters was analysed. Especially the subjectively experienced impact was studied (EDU53). And finally, the impact of school management on job satisfaction of teachers was also examined (Department of Teacher Education - EDU61).

One last management issue concerns the implementation of management-styles/ techniques which are used in industry (EDU12, EDU47). One example is the transfer of the concept of integral quality control to education in order to improve management at universities and secondary schools.

Besides structural elements, a school also contains cultural elements. A prime example of the intermingling of structure and culture can be seen in school regulations. A school is not only supposed to teach pupils vari-

ous subjects, but also a number of values and rules. Schools proclaim certain values which pupils should internalize and this has been explicitly investigated (EDU32 and the INES project). Values are also an integrated part of school management: school headmasters are confronted with a growing amount of external demands and should develop a viewpoint based on ethical values. What these values are, was the subject of a research of the Centre for Educational Policy and Innovation at the K.U.Leuven (EDU53).

1.1.3. Educational innovation

The last theme regarding educational organization to be mentioned concerns research about educational innovation. The basic aim of this research is to find out how schools react upon educational innovation (EDU5, EDU21, EDU53, SIU53). They focus on different aspects of these processes: 1) On the actors, e.g. the way in which teachers, pupils and headmasters experience educational innovation; 2) The innovation process in a specific school, e.g. the evaluation of the innovation process in elementary schools (Renewed Basic Education⁵) and 3) The content of the innovation, e.g. how do

5 Since 1973, experiments have been carried out in a number of schools with reformed primary education. A strongly individual approach is opted for here in order to fully develop the child's personality. This innovation is called renewed basic education.



classes react to a new Dutch curriculum? One of the major outcomes of these projects was that headmasters apply different management styles during the implementation process. Furthermore, it was obvious that there is very often an initial implementation during the innovation process; however, schools never totally implement the innovation. Educational innovations often slowed down, either because too many schools were involved in the program, or because of the insufficient training of teachers in function of educational innovation.

Besides innovation programs concerning the global structure of primary and secondary education, several special programs have been developed. One of them is the development of teaching materials and the introduction of health education in primary and secondary education by the Research Group on Social Medicine of the University of Gent (EDU9). This research unit published many teaching aids, tested these in schools and guided the implementation of health education in schools. The aim of the project was to integrate health education in parts of the curriculum in order to change the attitudes of the pupils towards unhealthy behaviour and to consequently motivate pupils towards adopting a way of life that is in accordance with the principles of healthy behaviour. Therefore, this unit did not stress the dangers of hazardous health behaviour, but highlighted values favouring healthy eating, security, social relations, alcohol prevention, smoking prevention, drug prevention, cancer prevention, HIV-infection prevention (EDU8), etc. Moreover, the researchers presented a school policy in favour of these principles of health education. Later on, this project was supported by the Centre for Societal Issues in Education of the University of Antwerpen - UIA (EDU8), developing special programs for the training of future teachers in teacher training colleges. Student-teachers need to be trained in health education and should learn how to effec-

tively use the appropriate didactic materials.

At the very beginning of this project, it was agreed that the experimental introduction of health education in a number of schools could provide much information about the school innovation process. For this reason, collaboration was sought with the Centre for Theoretical Sociology and Sociology of Education of the K.U.Leuven (EDU55) in order to study this process. Since the start, this unit investigated all strategies concerning the introduction of health education. The object of this research was the behaviour of the coordinators of the program, the decision-making processes of the headmasters and teachers, as well as the way teachers experienced this innovation along with the reactions of students.

Recently, both units (Gent and Leuven), are again involved in a program to promote 'The Healthy School', a concept which may be seen as a preparation for attainment targets.

1.2. Curriculum, didactics and evaluation

1.2.1. A general overview

The number of projects concerned with the study of the curriculum in its purest sense is rather limited. This is probably a result of the fact that most curricula, except those in universities, are nationally prescribed. Most teachers do not have to worry about curriculum development. Nevertheless, for certain particular subjects, curriculum research is available. The target of these projects was the development of a formal curriculum for a particular discipline and implied an evaluation of the old curriculum, fundamental research about related sciences, the evaluation system, the publication of textbooks and efficiency research. Some examples are physical education (EDU1, EDU21), geography (EDU27), languages (see 1.2.3.), biology



(EDU21), mathematics (EDU21), chemistry (EDU39), etc.

In addition to this, researchers are also interested in the question whether some curricula in higher education satisfy the potential of the students. Taking into account the time students have to study, these researchers investigate whether a particular program is not overcrowded. In order to attain a clear picture of this, they measure the time needed by students to study the program (EDU25). Moreover, most universities have research units which regularly organize evaluations of the professors' teaching behaviour in order to protect and improve the quality of teaching at university. These evaluation scales are interesting instruments to illustrate various parts of the didactics and to inquire about the appreciation of the university curriculum by the students.

Next to these applied forms of evaluation, some projects take evaluation as a research topic. First, researchers investigated the evaluation system in secondary schools (EDU45, EDU60, EDU60). In this last project, an inventory of the examination questions was made. Afterwards, they examined whether these questions were valid and whether they truly tested the knowledge of pupils. This type of research is also organized for specific subjects, such as chemistry and biology (EDU45), Dutch (EDU7, EDU25), etc. This last project already focuses

on evaluation methods with reference to the actual debate on attainment targets which have not yet been put into effect. Not only the validity of exams but also the economical value of entrance exams for higher education are tested. Since no entrance examinations are required in order to select students for higher education, the drop out rate of students in the first year of university is rather high. This results in an additional financial burden for society, universities and for students themselves (EDU34). This was one of the arguments researchers stressed when they pleaded for a special free counseling and testing program for first year students (EDU60).

The curriculum is not only investigated from the standpoint of the curriculum developer and the pupils' evaluations, but also as a subject of choice by the pupils. Some studies concentrate on the necessity and the efficiency of these choices. For example, one group wonders whether it is justifiable to introduce a special track in secondary education to train youngsters in the study of "synthetic material", whether obtaining a second certificate is necessary (EDU30, Study Advisory Service - EDU60) and what the different choice patterns are of boys and girls in secondary schools (EDU3) and more particularly in technical and vocational schools (EDU53), ...

Finally, one project provided a de-

scription of all policy measures necessary in order to create a coherent system of continued educational training facilities in Flanders (EDU21).

1.2.2. Extra-curricular tasks of the school

Because of the increasing complexity of society, policy makers often look for the solution of societal problems by using education as the preferred instrument. Many researchers wonder whether all these new demands should be integrated in schools and, if schools were to agree on it, how this should be done. Most projects include the planning and the implementation of these innovations as well as their evaluation (EDU8, EDU51).

An apparently popular field of research in this context is the study of the lack of culture (literature, arts, music) in schools. The questions raised are: 1) What do school headmasters think about culture? 2) Which cultural projects take place in schools (EDU43)? 3) Are pupils cultural illiterates (Training and Post graduate Courses for Students - EDU60)? 4) How can cultural education be enhanced by special informative packages (EDU21)? A second theme regarding extra-curricular activities in schools is relational and sexual education. Whereas researchers at the faculty of theology at the K.U.Leuven try to generate anthropological and ethical perspectives on sexual education in secondary schools, another team is more interested in, among other problems, the way teachers think about relational and sexual education, their satisfaction about the training they attended in order to teach these subjects, etc. (EDU30). Teachers were interviewed for this purpose. Still another project questions the impact of external experts like PMS, MST⁶ etc. on relational and sexual education (EDU51). Finally, a third theme

6 The Psycho-medico-social centres (PMS) counsel youngsters from the pre-school period up to the end of secondary education. They help them choose a branch of study and a future occupation. The Medical School Inspection (MST) regularly examines the health condition of the pupils.

to be mentioned in this context is health education, which was already described above.

Schools often refuse to agree upon these external demands. They are overburdened and cannot meet these demands within the existing framework. On the basis of the study of literature and the questioning of headmasters or teachers, researchers try to find out whether lessons really are overloaded and which solutions are possible in general (EDU8) or for a specific subject such as leisure education (SIU53).

1.2.3. Linguistic research

Some fields of curriculum analysis catch more attention than others. This is the case for the language curriculum. We will discuss the following subthemes: aspects of a language curriculum, language skills and foreign language instruction and learning.

Language curriculum

The primary objective of this kind of research is to improve language teaching on all levels. Therefore, some researchers are interested in vocabulary development (EDU48). Problematic is the use of different vocabularies in diverse textbooks, and it is the aim of the researchers to create more uniformity in these vocabularies. Besides the study of vocabulary, some investigators specifically focus on grammatical issues in order to make language training more efficient (EDU40). They concentrate on common and language-specific grammatical concepts for Dutch, English and French in order to create more uniformity. Another aspect of curriculum research is the role of the mother tongue in the teaching of subjects other than languages. Researchers question whether the appropriate use of the mother tongue has a central place during the teaching of other subjects and whether teachers pay attention to the use of language when they correct exams (EDU7). A concrete

example is the study of terminology used in science teaching (EDU39).

Language skills

Language proficiency has been tested in certain subjects such as French and specific skills, e.g. writing and reading skills.

The Multimedia Centre of the University of Antwerpen - UFSIA (EDU60) tested the French linguistic skills of secondary school graduates entering university in order to study Romance languages. This provided an indication of the quality of French teaching in secondary schools. Results of the study show a declining level of knowledge during the last decade. After a period of supplementary tuition, most pupils reached an appropriate level in order to study Romance languages. This indicates that the quality of French teaching in secondary education has declined, but not the ability of the pupils.

In relation to specific skills, several studies (EDU7, EDU37, SIU37, SIU57) investigate the desirability and realizability of reading and writing skills on different educational levels and in different subjects. These projects give advice regarding curriculum development and describe special problems pupils have to cope with, such as difficulties in expressing themselves verbally. Tackling these problems is important in order to avoid func-

tional illiteracy.

Not only the meaning of language skills needed during a school career is investigated, but also its meaning with regard to the professional career. The question is whether language teaching in schools satisfies the needs of the labour market. Most projects present an inventory of the labour market demand and compare it with the language skills of secondary school graduates (EDU7, EDU15, EDU56). This problem examines particular tracks as well as specific subjects such as French. Does language teaching in vocational schools fulfill the requirements of the labour market?

Foreign language instruction and learning

Other studies concentrate on the language acquisition process or on mechanisms determining language teaching in general (EDU15, EDU26, EDU40, EDU59). The physiological and psychological aspects of language acquisition are the main issues. Moreover, more and more attention is paid to the influence of the mother tongue and the environmental factors on the acquisition of foreign languages. One example: in order to analyse the influence of the mother tongue, researchers (EDU59) compared Dutch-speaking children to French-speaking children learning English.

In addition, the relationship between



pupil language learning and language teaching has been analysed. Again, the important role of the teacher is stressed.

Furthermore, the mechanisms determining the language acquisition of children living in a multilingual environment (e.g. non-Dutch speaking children attending Dutch-speaking schools) and the pedagogical role of the parents has been examined (SIU37). In this study, some questions covered include: How do parents guide their children in non-Dutch speaking schools? Do these children have a learning disability? In addition, the consequences of multilingualism in the classroom are studied (EDU26).

Another current problem concerns the linguistic development of immigrant pupils. These children often have a language delay. Some possible solutions are 1) To give them extra education, or/and 2) To pay more attention to these problems during the teacher training programs.

Finally, we would like to call attention to research which takes place in industry (EDU15). They develop language courses for specific companies such as Sabena, Alcatel-Bell, Sidmar and Bekaert (see Further Education).

1.2.4. New technologies in education

New technologies, such as the media (TV, film, radio, etc.) and the computer, became so important in our society that schools had to open their gates for these new phenomena. Consequently, these new sources of information and didactics became an important topic in educational research. The following themes were examined: the impact of and the familiarity with new technologies, the use of new technologies in schools and the use of the computer to combat specific problems.

Impact and familiarity

In order to understand the impact of

technology on society and education (EDU30), several problems were investigated. Subthemes were:

- The relation of technology education to the labour market;
- New technologies and the learning process;
- The impact of technology on the relationship between general education and vocational education;
- Technology and further training/in-service training;
- The impact of technology on education in the third world;
- The role of technology in teacher training.

One project paid special attention to a comparative analysis of the situation in the Dutch speaking community and the French-speaking community concerning these issues (EDU21).

Because technology changed so rapidly during the last ten to twenty years, the lack of familiarity among the majority of the population regarding new technology forms a problem. They are often unaware of the benefits and possibilities. Research indicates that pupils as well as teachers are ignorant about them. Results show that, even though a number of pupils have no previous experience with computers, boys as well as girls have a positive attitude towards them (EDU21). Among teachers, there seems to be an enormous lack of information about software (EDU37, Multimedia Centre - EDU60). Especially in teacher training colleges as well as in other institutions of higher education, more attention should be paid to this problem. Otherwise, industry will impose norms and teachers will no longer be able to distinguish didactically valuable software from other software.

Educational use of new technologies

First, we would like to mention research evaluating the educational use of the media, such as the didactic value of television, the use of video

programs (EDU11) and multimedia learning environments (EDUCO - EDU60). The latter evaluates educational programs in which text, sound, image, video, photographs, etc. are integrated.

However, most research deals with computers. On the one hand, this analysis can be general, questioning the advantages of using computer networks in the classroom (EDU14, EDU30) or investigating how to create powerful computer-assisted learning environments (EDU11). On the other hand, the majority of these studies have a more specific character. Here are some examples:

- The use of interactive multimedia learning environments (EDU12). 'Interactive' means that pupils can actively communicate with the program. Why and how pupils make use of this is investigated. They also try to link computer use with pupil characteristics such as intelligence, social background, etc.;
- Software application in primary education (EDU37);
- Computer assistance in language education (Multimedia Centre - EDU60);
- Use of graphic computers in physics (EDU36);
- Integration of micro-computers in economic education (Academic Teacher Training - EDU61). This project evaluates the use of computers in four ways: 1) As a source of information; 2) As a means of instruction; 3) As an aid for simulation and 4) As graphic support.

The use of computers to tackle specific problems

At the university level, researchers are developing a database for the evaluation of universities. Also at this level, researchers are trying to develop didactic materials for automatic guidance and testing of pupils (EDU21), as the number of pupils makes individual guidance impossible. In addition, a computerized documentation and information system has been created (EDU21) in order to retrieve educational publi-

cations without any delay.

Not only organizational and administrative matters are supported by computers. Software was also developed in order to facilitate the language learning process (EDU48, EDU56), to check the language skills of individual persons and to examine whether these skills are sufficient for his/her job (EDU21), as well as programs to support the integration of handicapped people in normal education (EDU2), such as technology for blind pupils. Finally, some researchers developed computer assisted learning environments especially for pupils with reading and writing problems in vocational education and in adaptation class in secondary schools, or software for self-instruction in university education (EDU11). The objective is to improve skills by means of computer-assisted guidance.

1.3. Actors

1.3.1. The teacher

A first theme requiring close scrutiny is the social position of teachers. This position has suffered from a decline in status. During the past century, this change has been the subject of historical analyses (EDU6, EDU38), but researchers also observed the current position of teachers. Indeed, many teachers feel that their work, being their contribution to society, is not appreciated as such. The HIVA analysed work experiences of teachers as well as how they spend their time. Another favourite theme in this context is the professional development of teachers (EDU53). Especially the determinants of this professional development are under investigation. These are the main research topics:

- The relationship between, on the one hand, autonomy and on the other hand, collegiality among teachers, and its influence on their professional development;
- The impact of the teacher's personal background on his/her profes-

sional career;

- The impact of cultural views and professional development.

Equally important are projects investigating the efficiency of a teacher's behaviour in relation to the pupil's achievements (EDU1, EDU53, EDU55). Other researchers are not directly interested in the social position of teachers, but instead focus on the pedagogical impact of teachers on pupils (EDU22). They try to understand teachers' behaviour as a reference person for pupils.

Former projects discussed the position of teachers in general, but others concentrate on more specific problems such as teacher profiles in vocational education, their problems, their labour satisfaction, personal characteristics and expectations, career planning, etc. (EDU10). However, most researchers dealing with specific problems are strongly interested in the changing role of women in education during the last decades (EDU6). This special interest in female teachers has undoubtedly been stimulated by the centres of women's studies. Researchers state that they want to help abolish the traditional role patterns in schools and to contribute to the evaluation of female teachers training colleges.

One aspect of research attracting special notice is the study of job satisfaction, motivation and the phenomenon of burn-out. It is a well-known fact that, after a few years, teachers often have to cope with feelings of dissatisfaction and burn-out symptoms. Researchers are trying to locate the cause, whether personal or structural, for this reduction in motivation (EDU29, EDU49). Cor-

relative research also points at the influence of school management towards job satisfaction of teachers (EDU55, Department of Teacher Education - EDU61). A related issue to this study is the examination of the educational personnel policy, such as the teaching career, interruptions in career-planning, dual-careers, profile of staff involved, etc. (EDU5, SIU22).

Finally, we would like to shed some light on the issue of teacher training. It is useful to make a distinction between teacher training in universities as opposed to teacher training colleges. Concerning university training, several researchers are collecting data to improve the curriculum as well as the structure of teacher training in general (EDU11, EDU5, EDU21, EDU27, Department of Teacher Education and Academic Teacher Training - EDU61), whereas others are more interested in certain faculties such as economics, physical education, geography, etc. They are striving for greater coherence by adapting the curriculum and the teaching practice to the changing social situations. They expect that scientific research results will lead to reforms contributing to the professionalization of teachers.

As for the training of pupil teachers in teacher training colleges, the first objective is to improve the training (EDU44, EDU45), especially pupil guidance during their teaching practice. School tutors often do not know how to guide a teacher trainee in the classroom. Furthermore, some researchers are investigating the needs of junior teachers and the needs of students in teacher training colleges (EDU45, EDU49). They are exam-



ining whether the training meets the expectations of the teachers. The conclusions of one inquiry show the need of a qualitative improvement of the training, especially as far as the curriculum is concerned. These researchers are not in favour of extending the training period, as this training is a second choice for many students. Consequently, an extension would reduce the motivation to spend additional years in college.

One of the problems teachers have to deal with today is the growing amount of extra-curricular demands from society. Researchers are questioning whether it is reasonable to expect teachers to integrate extra-curricular demands in their lessons, and whether teacher training is effective in this respect (EDU8, EDU51). This problem will be even more poignant once attainment targets will be imposed on schools. Nevertheless, presently teachers already need to be aware of the problems of a multi-cultural society. Because of the growing number of immigrant pupils in some schools, an important question for one research unit was how to train future teachers for multi-cultural education (EDU43).

1.3.2. The pupils/students

Other important actors in schools are the pupils. A lot of educational research has been focused on their situation. Four domains of research will be described in this section: 1) The school career; 2) The problem of the reduction in motivation; 3) The learning process and 4) Pupil tutoring and guidance.

Some research units concentrate on groups of pupils during their secondary school career (EDU46). Their purpose is to develop an explanatory career model, taking personal characteristics of the pupils and the school into account. Other units are interested in the school career of pupils in integrated education, i.e. schools where handicapped pupils are taught together with non handicapped pupils (EDU22, EDU33).

Not only the secondary school career was an interesting research topic; the transition to higher education was studied as well (EDU25). The central topic of their analysis concerned the choosing process and the way in which curriculum choices are influenced by certain elements such as socio-economic status, intelligence, educational career during secondary education, etc.

Related to the study of school careers is the study of the schooling level of the entire population. Based on a random sampling of the entire Flemish community, the population distribution with regard to different educational levels was described, including a special reference to the social selection and transfer mechanisms (EDU4). Besides this general analysis, specific levels of education are also under discussion, e.g.:

- The profile of pupils in vocational education (EDU10). This project describes pupils in vocational and technical schools, their social background, level of intelligence and motivation to study;
- The study of the background of female university students at the Free University of Brussel (EDU17). By following two groups (their educational career, socio-economic status and professional career), researchers are trying to develop explanatory models.

Secondly, we would like to focus on the problem of the reduction in pupil motivation. The growing reduction in motivation, the rising rate of absenteeism and school fatigue inspired educational research to concentrate on this particular problem

(EDU18, EDU29). Its aim is to gather information about the size and the spread of these problems in order to prevent or cure them. They are trying to detect the causes by means of correlation research, comparative analysis of different types of education and interviews with teachers and school headmasters.

Thirdly, the learning process of pupils/students draws a lot of attention among researchers. They are interested in the following aspects:

- 1) The typification of learning behaviour (EDU19, EDU25) analyses learning behaviour at university. It defines studying as a diversity of experiences, resulting in a kind of self-organization by the students. The other side of the coin reveals the teaching method of the lecturers as perceived by the students. Their opinions constitute relevant feed back for teachers and might even influence teaching behaviour. Also related to studying is the choice process (see previous statements);
- 2) The analysis of information assimilation by pupils (EDU11). Different aspects are investigated, such as information assimilation while watching television (e.g. subtitles), information assimilation when solving mathematical problems (EDU57), ...;
- 3) The examining of problem-solving by pupils (EDU11). This research tries to acquire a deeper understanding of the cognitive processes at the basis of problem solving and of the learning processes through which these skills are obtained. Especially for mathematics, results show that pupils who lack the capacity to make an adequate repre-

sentation of a mathematical problem are often in a disadvantaged position. Related to the analysis of problem-solving is research concerning levels of intelligence. Certain categories of pupils in particular are under discussion, e.g. pupils in special education and immigrant pupils (EDU11). These researchers measure the size of disadvantage of pupils and look for the origin of their problems.

Finally, we would like to pay attention to the initiatives directed towards the counseling of pupils and students. The majority of this kind of research uses university students as the target group and is meant to improve counseling practices and achievements.

A first theme measures the time students need to study for a course (EDU25). On the one hand, they evaluate the degree of difficulty of certain programs. On the other hand, they want to make university programs more uniform, which would most likely simplify the mobility from one university to another.

Secondly, several counseling and research centres are trying to help students with specific problems caused by the transition from secondary education to higher education (EDU60). These problems mostly have to do with insufficient prior knowledge and/or bad study habits of the students. First, these centres try to detect these inadequacies. For this purpose, one centre (Contact Group on Academic Education - EDU60) made an inventory of different learning styles. Afterwards, they attempted to solve the problem by organizing interactive workshops during which a deeper understanding of the subject matter was possible.

Finally, one project concentrates on the supervision of science research students (EDU24). A comparison between supervision methods and student attitudes in Belgium, the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands was made. In each country, the faculty of science of two

universities was analysed. Some questions asked were: 1) Who gets a doctor's degree and why? 2) How do they live through the process of working for a doctor's degree? 3) What are, respectively, the most important shortcomings in the training according to the students? 4) How much time does it take to obtain a doctor's degree? With regard to these problems, researchers concluded that the situation in the above-mentioned countries is rather similar.

Linked to this theme is the problem of in-service training for young and new university lecturers. Although this issue has not been in the spotlight until recently, at this moment universities are concerned more than ever before, and some universities have even organized a special training for young lecturers (EDU45, DUO - EDU60).

1.4. Education and unequal opportunities

Before starting with a description of research concerning unequal educational opportunities, we would like to mention the present discussion among researchers concerning the definition of unequal educational opportunities. There still is no agreement neither about the definition, nor about the causes. It is not our purpose to include details of this discussion. We merely would like to draw your attention to three important characteristics which students in educational research all recognized as important reasons for the inequality of educational opportunities:

1. The inequality of different social classes and the problem of poverty;
2. The inequality between men and women;
3. Ethnic inequality.

Most research tries to describe and explain different aspects of these inequalities in educational opportunities, such as differences in educational participation, in choice of courses, in learning difficulties and in school fatigue. Moreover, researchers are evaluating educational and school management innovations

implemented in order to correct these inequalities, such as part-time vocational training, alternative training, transition-projects, new vocational education, practical training, local school councils and the participation council. It should be mentioned that research in this field can often be linked to research regarding school careers.

Let us now look at these three dimensions in detail.

1.4.1. Inequality of social classes and the problem of poverty

Quite a bit of research deals with the educational situation of social classes (EDU4, EDU5, EDU25, EDU55). By outlining participation and the profile of participants, research stresses the unequal participation of pupils and students of some social classes to particular levels of education. Already during primary education, pupils from a lower social class face more learning difficulties. This trend continues during secondary school and is apparent in the choice of curriculum: these pupils opt for weaker courses of study. In other words, the school transfer may also be characterized as a process of social selection. Finally, the step to higher education is also determined by social and cultural factors. However, non-university higher education is more democratized than university education, i.e. lower social classes proportionally attend these institutions more than they attend universities. It should also be pointed out that at universities, even the choice of the discipline is different depending on the student's social class. Students from lower social classes choose other subjects than students from higher social classes, the latter also participating more frequently in postgraduate training (SIU28).

Besides these differences in participation, pupils from lower social classes are more often confronted with school fatigue and reduction in motivation, which in turn determines





Source: VDAB

and women

Already very early in life, during their socialization at home and in other environments, a polarization between girls and boys emerges, and this gender division is fostered at school. Research concentrates on differences in well-being, choice of curriculum, positions and career (EDU3, EDU5, EDU6, EDU17, EDU53, EDU55).

It is remarkable that, as far as the well-being of the pupils is concerned, some environmental factors have a different impact on boys and girls, such as family life, school size, co-education, etc. Not only the pupils' well being but also their achievements differ, e.g. in primary education, girls score better than boys. Also under investigation is why girls in secondary education opt for technical or vocational education less frequently than boys. Moreover, these differences between boys and girls in school are confirmed later in life. Inequalities continue after graduation and are expressed in the different career patterns.

Besides gender differences among pupils, differences between male and female teachers also draw attention, though not in terms of inequality. Current themes of research are (EDU6, EDU49): 1) The growing number of female teachers in secondary schools as well as education as a labour market for women and 2) The rather small proportion of female faculty members at university.

1.4.3. Ethnic inequalities

This theme already appeared in former paragraphs, mentioned along with the macro-level, linguistic research, pupils and teacher training. Because it is a very important issue at the moment, we would like to emphasize it once again, though very briefly.

Firstly, we would like to recall the projects involved in the current educational policy of the Flemish Com-

munity regarding immigrants in general (EDU5), or concerning a specific school level such as primary education. An important conclusion is that several measures are ineffective. Immigrants continue to have learning disadvantages such as language problems (EDU12, EDU59), they suffer more from school fatigue (EDU18) and they opt for weak courses of study and vocational education more often, which confirms and continues the initial inequality. Therefore, investigators focus on questions regarding the existence of multi-cultural education and how it should be organized. They stress the need to improve teacher training. Teachers occupy a central role in the success of multi-cultural education (EDU12, EDU43, EDU59). Furthermore, the danger of elite-schools becomes real: researchers are afraid that Flemish parents will send their children to schools without immigrant pupils, because they fear that there is a decrease in educational quality in schools with many immigrant children. Researchers warn for the danger of 'concentration schools' (EDU5). As an extension to this issue, however, policy-makers have already taken the necessary measures to handle these problems.

1.5. Transfer problems

On the one hand, we can distinguish transfer problems within the Community educational system, and on the other hand, we can identify transfer problems from school to the labour market.

Connected to the earlier discussed problem of participation and the mechanisms of social selection during the transfer process, several inquiries analyse difficulties occurring during transfer to higher education (EDU34, SIU28). They examine factors determining the transfer process, such as social background, intelligence, school career, etc. Furthermore, they evaluate access to university and suggest methods for an effective selection.

Likewise, transfer problems at the



higher education level are analysed (EDU50). The purpose is to give a scientific explanation to transfers in university education or from university to non-university education and vice-versa. Within this framework, transfers would be possible, while retaining the characteristic traits of each course.

An even more popular subject of study is the transfer from school to the labour market (EDU5, EDU21, EDU56, Advisory Centre for Students and Study Advisory Service - EDU60). Many studies, the majority done by the HIVA, describe the situation of secondary school graduates. Here are some examples of research questions:

- * A presentation of the future of pupils in their last year of secondary education. What will they do? Will they look for a job or attend higher education?
- * What do young people think about manual labour?
- * What is the situation of school drop-outs in certain areas, such as Limburg?
- * An analysis of job opportunities for general secondary school graduates in the labour market. Although nowadays, general secondary education is meant to be a point of departure towards higher education, every year, a number of graduates end their studies and enter the labour market. Do they have any career opportunities without any vocational training?

* A comparison among five European countries regarding career opportunities of school drop-outs.

* An analysis of the careers of technical and vocational school graduates: how did they experience their entry into the labour market? What is their position on the labour market? What is their work experience?

Not only secondary school graduates, but also university graduates have been included in this study. A description of the labour opportunities for university graduates was made (Advisory Centre for Students and Study Advisory Service - EDU60) as well as a study of the career of female graduates of the Free University of Brussel, compared to their male colleagues (EDU17).

Besides these rather global definitions of the problem, some research projects deal in particular with risk groups and initiatives which try to abolish the risk (EDU5). Their analysis is especially focused on labour opportunities for poorly trained people. Concerning these initiatives, they evaluate their performance and effectiveness in order to provide relevant information to policy makers. Some of these initiatives include VDAB training courses, bridging courses, alternative learning, etc.

Many studies stress the discrepancy between the knowledge pupils acquire at school and the knowledge

they need at work (EDU21, EDU56). Consequently, they discuss initiatives which try to reduce this discrepancy, e.g. catching-up programs, computer-assisted tools to avoid knowledge gaps, etc. One project highlights the discrepancy problem from the standpoint of school management (EDU5). It evaluates school policy with regard to employment. The question is whether schools implement special measures to increase the labour market opportunities of their pupils, e.g. does school management at technical and vocational school courses adapt to industrial needs?

1.6. Learning and behavioural problems

The topic of learning problems has already been part of previous discussions, for example specific learning problems of immigrant pupils, reading and writing problems and the phenomenon of functional illiteracy, the vicious circle of poverty, the use of new technologies to solve learning problems and the lack of information about learning problems during teacher training. We will now systematically review this topic. The issue of learning problems has mainly been studied by remedial educationalists, but we will also include projects by other scholars. We will divide this chapter in three parts, namely 1) General learning difficulties; 2) Specific problems and 3) Assistance and remedial action.

1.6.1. General learning problems

These projects focus on the detection and/or description of learning problems. An inventory of the problems is made, the spread of the problem among the population is analysed, causes and consequences are examined and possible assistance is suggested. In their search for causes, researchers also link learning problems to factors such as family characteristics (e.g. social background) as well as school characteristics. This type of research is di-



rected towards two educational levels, the elementary (EDU10, EDU23) and the secondary level (EDU13, EDU23). These researchers mainly measure the size of the problem in order to develop assistance programs. Besides these studies, other investigation concentrates especially on learning/adaptation problems, which occur during transfers from kindergarten to primary education, from primary education to secondary education and from secondary education to higher education (EDU13, EDU23).

1.6.2. Specific problems

As has already been mentioned in the paragraph on language research, several studies investigate reading, writing and spelling problems in order to improve curricula, didactic methods, textbooks, etc. (EDU23, SIU37, SIU57). One project specifically analyses dyslexia (EDU23). It compares normally evolving pupils with dyslexic pupils in order to treat the disability from kindergarten on.

Not only learning problems, but also behavioural and emotional problems are under discussion in the project "epidemiological research for behavioural and emotional problems of children in Flanders" (EDU23). In this project, a sampling of pupils with such problems was analysed. The overall research target was much broader than school-related problems. Here we may also refer to projects such as 1) The treatment of children with depressions (EDU13) and 2) An analysis of bullying patterns at school (EDU51). Also, the previously discussed problem of school fatigue may indirectly be classified under the heading "behavioural and emotional problems" (EDU18, EDU29). These projects look for reasons, influences, and consequences. This problem is also studied in specific groups of pupils such as immigrant pupils, vocational school pupils, university students, etc.

A totally different target group is formed by the handicapped pupils

and students. Several studies concentrate on their integration in a normal classroom, which results in specific learning problems (EDU2, EDU13, EDU23). As mentioned before, a great deal of research develops, implements and evaluates modern technological equipment which facilitates their integration, e.g. special devices for the visually handicapped. Yet besides the physically handicapped, the mentally handicapped form a much more complex problem. In this case, studies are especially directed towards the analysis of cognitive processes.

Another field of interest is delinquent behaviour of pupils (SIU57). Misbehaviour of youth might take the form of delinquency. The link with other variables is analysed, e.g. 1) The relation between delinquency and unemployment; 2) The link between delinquency and school fatigue and 3) The correlation between delinquency and school experience. Especially the phenomenon of social vulnerability of certain young people has been studied.

A final issue which deserves to be mentioned is the orthopedagogic assistance of pupils with cancer (EDU13).

1.6.3. Assistance and remedy

Among many of the researchers interested in learning problems, a great number of them has concentrated on finding methods to help or cure the handicapped. In some cases, they focus on a specific problem, e.g. 1) Fighting illiteracy (EDU38, SIU37) and 2) Promoting social competence of children in the classroom (EDU51). The ultimate aim is to teach children how to enter into a relationship with each other in order to avoid disadvantageous social positions.

To reach this objective, assistance structures are created. In the first place, there are special schools for pupils who cannot attend the normal educational system. The functioning of this type of education is a research

topic (EDU13, EDU23). Besides this type of education, mainly meant for pupils with a low level of intelligence as well as with cognitive learning disabilities, we also need to mention the special youth service. This circuit is meant for pupils not with specific learning problems, but with behavioural problems such as delinquency, depressions, etc. Some of these pupils live in special institutions permanently. Investigators question whether it is still efficient to organize education within these special institutions and whether the quality of the pedagogical facilities is justified (EDU23).

An important organization which, among other tasks, means to detect learning and behavioural problems and to offer assistance programs is the PMS (Psycho-medical-Social Centre). Several researchers are studying the effectiveness of this service (EDU10, EDU13, EDU23). For example:

- 1) The CSBO (EDU10) has set up a program involving the PMS centres responsible for pupils with learning problems during primary education. They hypothesize that assistance for disadvantaged pupils would improve if PMS collaborators would also give advice and take remedial action;
- 2) At the Centre for Special Remedial Education of the K.U. Leuven (EDU23), researchers assisted by the PMS have measured pupil skills. If these skills improve, then the assistance might be considered to be effective;
- 3) The study of different types of cooperation between schools (supported by the PMS centres) and welfare work in order to handle pupil problems (SIU57).



Besides research measuring effectiveness, much research stresses the fact that PMS collaborators often do not possess enough knowledge or skills in order to help pupils (EDU10, EDU13). Especially when dealing with specific learning problems, such as problems related to mathematics, they do not have enough basic knowledge in order to intervene.

Not only PMS collaborators, but also teachers at all levels show shortcomings in know-how to help these pupils (EDU10, EDU13, EDU44). A crucial point in pupil assistance is the diagnosis or detection of the problem and teachers very often are not trained to do this.

2. Education outside the Community Educational System

As mentioned in the introduction, the field of education outside the community educational system is very diverse and still expanding. The first research project we would like to mention is a project searching for the regarding lifelong learning in Flanders. The purpose of such an investigation is to build up a supply, fulfilling the requirements of these demands (EDU28, EDU58, SIU53).

Equally important is the research-aim to stimulate the coordination of adult education outside the community educational system. This has already been done in certain regions, specifically in the field of adult education, by starting negotiations with all actors involved both inside and outside the community educational system (EDU28). However, adult education has a longer tradition (EDU5, EDU11); research not only describes different forms (basic education, second chance education, ...) but also analyses social inequalities and emancipatory functions.

Besides these more general investigations, some projects concentrate on the quality of a specific type of training, e.g. training needs for public servants, the development of programs for inspectors of the foundation "Child & Family" (EDU23), the necessity for updating courses for social nurses (EDU23).

This list should be completed with projects focusing on training for people working in the formal employment system, for there is a lack of adequate training, e.g. for teachers, principals, university lecturers, etc. Programs usually focus on specific problems such as: 1) Teaching minority groups and coping with multicultural classes (EDU43); 2) How to manage a class during a geography excursion (EDU27); 3) On-site training for beginning university lecturers and other teachers (EDU45, DUO - EDU60), and 4) Management courses for headmasters (EDU47, Department of Teacher Education - EDU61). In addition, researchers feel the need to improve training in these domains, e.g. by examining the impact of marketing strategies on the quality of the training (EDU7).

Furthermore, there are programs for employees in industry, e.g. research units developing language courses for specific companies. An example of this is "Bellingua", a vocabulary list containing 300 of the most frequently used terms in Alcatel-Bell. This list is made in four languages

and written in useful phrases.

This list of research about further training is rather short. One of the reasons is that it is a fairly new area in education. Nevertheless, it is obvious that a lot of activities in this field may be seen as part of an initiative to promote social welfare, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Many educational researchers have participated in international projects. On the one hand, some research is individually anchored, but is developed in relationship to foreign researchers and based on common interests. On the other hand, some programs are stimulated by international organizations. The OECD has a rather long tradition in attaining international cooperation. Here, it is relevant to mention the INTS-project (international educational indicators) and research about effectiveness of schooling.

Within the framework of the EU, the interest in education strongly developed since the creation of ERASMUS. One initiative which is important to mention is Human Capital and Mobility. This network gives the opportunity to exchange researchers and to develop international networks in order to improve human capital and technological research on the basis of quantity as well as quality.

Other international programs in which Flemish researchers are involved are: 1) PLUTO: A Project to Link Universities and Teaching Organizations (an example of research going on through PLUTO is the study of the educational use of computer networks) and 2) I.E.A.: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. Within this framework, research about, for example, the efficiency of



mathematical education takes place.

Two last cooperation networks interesting to educational research should be mentioned: DELTA, a network which focuses on the application of telematic systems in education, e.g. for flexible and distance education and The European Social Foundation, a service of the Flemish Community which finances educational research, e.g. research concerning alternating training, adult education, permanent schooling, etc.

CONCLUSION

This overview is of course limited: only the projects of empirical, educational research of the last five years have been traced. Methodology could not be discussed and the information about the results was very restricted.

Though limited, the overview gives a broad prospective of the interests of researchers. During the past years, this field of research has evolved in a number of ways. Some emerging trends are:

1) Researchers work on issues policy makers and educational practitioners are interested in. This is partly determined by the funding system (an important source primarily supports policy-oriented research) and partly by educational researchers wanting to contribute to improving the educational system. Besides educational policy, problems pertaining to education in practice, such as problems at schools, headmasters, teachers, organizers of education and so forth are put in the spotlight. Some examples of such political and practical issues, reflected in educational research, include the attention given to the growing number of immigrant pupils and multicultural education, the use of computers in education, etc.;

2) Secondly, quite a number of researchers are interested in international issues which command the attention of the educational research community, e.g. the idea of educational innovation, effectiveness of

schooling, the use of computers, the importance of languages in education, etc.;

3) Although researchers are still interested in the individual actors in the educational context, they are paying more and more attention to education as a collective phenomenon. Schools are more than ever before analysed as an educational actor;

4) Finally, there is a trend not to limit research to description and analysis, but to use research as an active factor as well. Researchers not only use teachers, counsellors, headmasters, etc. as subjects of observation, but also as collaborators in order to improve the educational situation.

Although education has been institutionalized as separate organizations, and although a number of researchers analyse education in its own isolated environment, more and more researchers become aware of the relation between the educational system and the global society. The detection of conformity and disparity between both may contribute to a better response of the educational system to societal demands.

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Research on Social Integration in Flanders

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